Quota hike of liquor for defence forces

*415. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the news-item, "Booze bonanza for Army, spirits higher" appearing in the Hindustan Times dated the 25th November, 2001, has come to the notice of Government;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether the possible impact of the quota hike of liquour for the defence forces on their operational efficiency had been considered before resorting to the hike; and

(d) whether it is a fact that Defence Services Wives' Welfare Association have expressed reservation to the quota hike?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) The Government is aware of the news item "Booze bonanza for Army, spirits higher" published in the Hindustan Times dated 25th November, 2001. The maximum monthly liquor quota for service personnel has been changed with effect from 20th August, 2001 with a view to rationalize and bring some uniformity in the liquor quota prescribed for different categories of service personnel. The change in the liquor quota is expected to have no adverse impact on operational efficiency of the defence forces. Past experience indicates that actual off-take of liquor is much below the total quantity authorized. Further it is added that no representation expressing reservation to the change in the liquor quota has been received from Defence Services Wives' Welfare Association.

Development of dry lands

*416. DR. (Ms.) P. SELVIE DAS:
PROF. A. LAKSHMISAGAR:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any request from the State Government of Karnataka for Central assistance for its 690 crore watershed project for the development of dry lands in five districts of the State;